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# A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

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TO: Chair Smith Warner  
Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Fahey  
Members of the House Rules Committee

FR: Catie Theisen, OR AFL-CIO

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 4157, One-time payments for low-income workers

February 17, 2022

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across the state and is proud to be a voice for all workers in the legislative process.

COVID-19 has shed light on and exacerbated the many cracks in our systems particularly for workers, for low-wage earners, and historically and currently marginalized Oregonians. While the pandemic is not over, many of the supports that helped some of our communities survive are ending. While our broader economy has made strong gains, inflation and the cost of living have increased. Working families need support to keep pace and pay for essential needs.

HB 4157 will help address this by providing one-time \$600 cost of living support payments to individuals who claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit for 2020. Checks will go out no later than July 31 2022. In addition to this bill, we very much support a parallel budget-ask to make sure that households who would otherwise qualify but have an ITIN filer in the household are not excluded from this \$600 payment.

While we are very disappointed that Oregon couldn't crack the code to using ARPA funds as intended for premium pay targeted to essential workers who worked in-person during the height of the pandemic, this bill does target some of the lowest-income workers, providing much needed payments to help deal with the rising cost of living and inflation. We also appreciate that these low-income workers will not have to fill out an application to qualify, nor will a stand-alone administration need to be set up to get these payments out the door expediently.

It's critical that Oregon take actions to support essential workers and help protect low wage earners who are struggling the most as we continue to weather this pandemic. We encourage your YES vote on HB 4157.